



**WisDOT/Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin Meeting
Thursday, June 24, 2004, 11:00-12:00pm**

People in attendance

Casey Newman, WisDOT BOP
Bobbi Retzlaff, WisDOT, BOP
Tom Huber, WisDOT, BOP

Marjorie Ward, Bicycle Federation
Robbie Webber, Bicycle Federation
Tim Kiefer, Bicycle Federation

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The meeting began at 11:00. Casey Newman, WisDOT, gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from larger Wisconsin cities at this point. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.

2. Gathering of input from the Bicycle Federation: Discussion focused on the following issues:

- a. Corridors

It was noted that WisDOT should make an effort to connect corridors to large urban areas so the corridors are multimodal corridors. Currently, there are often gaps in bike systems. The system will be fine in rural and urban areas, but disappear on the periphery. Examples of highways that cause such barriers around Madison include 12, 14, 30, 18, 151. The Glacial Drumlin trail was also cited as an example. As one person noted, missing connections would be unacceptable for vehicle travel, but have been taken for granted with other modes.

It was also noted that bicycle and pedestrian modes are typically cut when corridors focus only on passenger or freight travel. Passenger and freight travel act as a barrier.

- b. Routine Accommodations

Every transportation project should be as multimodal as possible. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be included in the initial project, instead of installing them later with transportation enhancement funds. A good example of routine accommodations has been wider paved shoulders on state highways.

Local governments need to be held accountable.

c. Bike Path Fees

Bicycle paths that receive federal funds for construction need to be eligible for maintenance funds as well. Local governments are reluctant to build bike paths since no maintenance funding is available.

In addition, paths using federal funds should not be allowed to charge user fees. These paths are typically commuter paths (e.g., Capitol City, Fox River trails). If it is acceptable to charge tolls for bike users, it should be acceptable to charge tolls on highway users.

d. Proportional Safety Funding

Safety funding needs to be distributed in proportion to all fatalities (bicyclists, pedestrians), not much highway fatalities.

e. Transportation Enhancement Funds

Wisconsin needs to restore STP-D funds for bike projects. Similarly, there should be just one fund for all STP-D projects – not a separate pool for bikes.

Wisconsin needs to stay on par with other states in terms of distributing transportation enhancement funds.

f. ATVs

There is a perception that ATV users provide tourism monies and bicyclists do not.

Counties have been building trails with federal funds and then buying the land. By purchasing the land, they are able to remove the “motorized vehicles prohibited” restriction and allow ATVs.

g. Miscellaneous

Has any thought been given to looking at European countries in how they have integrated bicycles into their transportation systems. Countries like Germany have a very similar climate to Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has an opportunity to be a leader among the states in providing bicycle accommodations. The state already has an edge with its paved country roads and turning rails to trails.

The Bicycle Federation distributed a document listing their major issues, identifying what the Bicycle Federation is doing on these issues and others, and identifying what WisDOT can do for bicyclists. A copy of this document is attached to these notes.



June 24, 2004

Bicycling and Transportation in Wisconsin

Major issues:

- Routine Accommodation
- Proportional Safety Funding
- Getting more well designed trails/paths and safer roads: funding for bicycle facilities
- Safe Routes to Schools Funding and Program Support
- Promoting the Bicycle as a Transportation Mode
- ATVs on Bicycle Trails and Potential Conflicts

What the Bicycle Federation is doing on these issues and others:

- Working with WisDOT BOTS to help preserve existing bicycle safety programs
- Asking the legislature to provide proportional safety funding for bicycle/pedestrian issues
- Working with communities like Dane County and the City of Milwaukee to plan bicycle facilities and bicycle safety educational programs
- Asking the legislature to reinstate STP-D funding in the state budget
- Working on contract with WisDOT to complete an economic impact study of bicycling manufacturing, retail, and tourism in Wisconsin. The study was commissioned by the Governor's Bicycle Council and will be based on existing data and research. The final product will be an 8 page glossy brochure/report.
- Printing an *Annual Bicycling Event Booklet and Resource Guide* that lists all of the bicycle events in Wisconsin and all of the bicycle clubs and shops and the WisDOT district bicycle/pedestrian coordinators and state coordinator. We print 12,000 booklets.
- We help organize a bi-annual bicycle conference with the sponsorship of the WisDOT and the authorization of the Governor's Bicycle Council
- Working with WisDOT and many other groups to put on Bike to Work Week promotions in Madison and Milwaukee and to consult and help other communities in starting these promotions.
- Partnering with WisDOT in the printing of the state bicycle maps
- Linking to WisDOT resources on our website
- Promoting bicycling for transportation and recreation in Wisconsin
- Working for more trails and safer roads on which to bicycle
- Making our voice heard when ATV trail use issues arise

Working on Safe Routes

What the WisDOT can do for bicyclists:

- Expand on their trend towards routine accommodation and continue to provide paved shoulders on all state highways as a matter of practice. Assure that all bridge projects include accommodation for bicyclists. *→ ways to cross highway barriers bicyclists + peds*
- Assure that when local communities use state or federal funds that they provide routine accommodation for bicyclists
- Provide support for proportional safety funding
- Continue to support Bike to Work Week activities
- Continue to partner with Bicycle Federation on projects like the economic impact study and the state bicycle map
- Participate in discussions and problem solving regarding conflicts between ATVs and bicyclists.

True multi-modal planning

The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin would like to partner with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in any way that we can to promote bicycling in Wisconsin. Please contact me at any time to discuss your ideas or concerns (marjorie@bfw.org, 608-251-4456).

Regards,

Marjorie Ward
Executive Director

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Building Complete Streets

ISSUE

In ISTEA and TEA-21, Congress established the principle that new road projects and reconstructions should provide safe accommodation of bicycling and walking. However, federal guidance on this issue has been overlooked by many state and local transportation agencies. **The reauthorization of TEA-21 offers an opportunity to strengthen this vision.**

STATUS

Neither the House bill nor the Senate bill currently contains language directing states to construct "complete streets."

The Senate and House bills both continue the relatively weak wording in TEA-21 which prohibits highway projects from severing existing bicycle and pedestrian routes, and says "bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities..."

BACKGROUND

Our states, cities, counties and towns have built many miles of streets and roads that are safe and comfortable only for travel in one way, in a motor vehicle. These roadways often lack sidewalks, have lanes too narrow to share with bicyclists, and feature few, poorly marked, or dangerous pedestrian crossings. A recent federal survey found that about one-quarter of walking trips take place on roads without sidewalks or shoulders, and bike lanes are available for only about 5 percent of bicycle trips.

Streets without safe places to walk and bicycle put people at risk. While 10 percent of all trips are made by foot or bicycle, more than 13 percent of all traffic fatalities are bicyclists or pedestrians. The most dangerous places to walk and bicycle are sprawling communities with streets that are built only for driving. A recent study comparing the United States with Germany and the Netherlands, where complete streets are common, found that bicyclist

and pedestrian death rates are two to six times higher in the United States.

States are not building roads as complete transportation corridors. Only one percent of all federal transportation funding goes to bicycle or pedestrian facilities. In 2000, the U.S. DOT issued guidance saying, "bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist." But by their own admission, fewer than half the states follow this guidance.

The idea of "Complete Streets" is gaining momentum. Complete streets provide choices to the people who live, work and travel on them. Pedestrians and bicyclists are comfortable using complete streets. A network of complete streets improves the safety, convenience, efficiency and accessibility of the transportation system for all users. Every road project should create complete streets.

OUR POSITION

A paragraph should be added to Section 109 (Standards) of Title 23:

109(m) As an element of good highway design, all projects involving new construction or reconstruction under this title, on which bicycles and/or pedestrians are permitted, shall include appropriate provisions to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. Exceptions to this standard are allowed if, in non-urbanized areas there is a demonstrable lack of need for such accommodations, or such accommodations would exceed 20 percent of the overall costs of the larger highway project.

OPPOSITION CONCERN

An appropriate balance must be reached between the need to provide states and local transportation agencies with flexibility and the need to achieve certain desirable outcomes that Congress and USDOT requested in ISTEA and TEA-21 but which have not yet been delivered.



Safety Funding for Bicycling and Walking

ISSUE

Bicycling and walking currently account for nearly 10 percent of trips and 13 percent of traffic fatalities (over 5,000 a year). Yet, federal transportation safety dollars are doing little to make it safer for people to walk and bicycle. On average, states are spending less than two percent of their federal safety funds on projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety (see chart). Twenty-two states spend 0 percent of their safety money on bicycle or pedestrian projects, despite fatality rates in those states that range from five percent to 28 percent. Congress should increase safety funding for bicycling and pedestrian projects to a percentage rate consistent with the percentage of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities.

STATUS

Federal safety programs highlight seatbelt use, ending drunken driving, and other worthy safety goals. Both House and Senate versions of reauthorization highlight safety. In fact, the Senate version is called SAFETEA. The rail safety program, a long established and successful special safety category, is slated to receive \$200 million per year in the Senate version of the upcoming transportation reauthorization. Rail crossing deaths have been reduced to less than 400 per year. It is time for bicycle and pedestrian safety to join the list of federal safety priorities.

BACKGROUND

The demand for more safety funds for bicycling and walking is strong. The news media is filled with stories of the deaths of bicyclists and pedestrians in hit-and-run crashes, the dangers faced by children walking and biking to school, and the difficulties older Americans have in crossing busy streets.

When states have opened up grant programs aimed at improving safety, they have been overwhelmed by the demand. For example, a \$1 million program offered by the Oregon DOT to install two basic safety measures – median refuge islands and curb extensions – received more than \$6 million in requests from local jurisdictions.

Many safety hazards for people on foot and bicycle are well known: lack of sidewalks, poor or non-existent crosswalks, poorly designed and poorly lit intersections, to name just a few. With sufficient funding, bicycle-pedestrian safety programs can do the following:

Target high-crash areas. In many metropolitan areas, certain road segments have an unusually high level of bicycle-pedestrian crashes, and targeted interventions can help.

Offer grants to communities to install safety fixes known to be effective, but which are missing on most roadways. These may include median refuge islands, better lighting, and/or correction of dangerous storm grates.

Establish a "spot safety improvement" program that allows transportation agencies to fix hazards based in part on input from the public. Such programs will fix potholes, replace dangerous storm drain grates, and lay new pavement stripes and post warning signs.

Increased funding for bicycle and pedestrian safety will lead to the installation of thousands of popular, low-cost improvements that will really make a difference in Americans' lives.



FACTS AND FIGURES

State	2001-2002 Portion of traffic deaths that were bike-ped <i>i</i>	1998-2002 Portion of fed. safety set-aside spent on bike-ped safety <i>ii</i>	State	2001-2002 Portion of traffic deaths that were bike-ped <i>i</i>	1998-2002 Portion of fed. safety set-aside spent on bike-ped <i>ii</i>
Alabama	7.0%	0.0%	Missouri	8.4%	0.3%
Alaska	12.8%	0.3%	Montana	5.0%	0.0%
Arizona	16.9%	3.4%	Nebraska	5.6%	6.3%
Arkansas	6.7%	0.0%	Nevada	16.1%	7.3%
California	20.8%	4.8%	New Hampshire	6.3%	0.0%
Colorado	10.3%	2.0%	New Jersey	23.1%	0.0%
Connecticut	14.4%	0.0%	New Mexico	15.6%	0.0%
Delaware	15.0%	0.2%	New York	25.0%	5.5%
DC	18.3%	0.0%	North Carolina	11.9%	0.6%
Florida	20.0%	8.4%	North Dakota	3.0%	2.1%
Georgia	11.0%	1.4%	Ohio	7.8%	0.0%
Hawaii	28.6%	0.0%	Oklahoma	8.0%	0.8%
Idaho	5.9%	0.0%	Oregon	14.0%	0.0%
Illinois	15.0%	1.0%	Pennsylvania	12.2%	0.0%
Indiana	7.7%	0.5%	Rhode Island	12.7%	2.9%
Iowa	5.4%	0.0%	South Carolina	11.5%	0.1%
Kansas	5.5%	0.0%	South Dakota	7.4%	0.2%
Kentucky	7.2%	0.0%	Tennessee	6.5%	0.7%
Louisiana	13.0%	0.1%	Texas	12.8%	0.1%
Maine	7.4%	0.0%	Utah	10.6%	0.0%
Maryland	16.8%	0.0%	Vermont	5.9%	3.1%
Massachusetts	16.5%	0.0%	Virginia	11.6%	1.3%
Michigan	15.0%	0.7%	Washington	12.5%	3.2%
Minnesota	9.0%	0.3%	West Virginia	7.5%	0.0%
Mississippi	7.6%	0.0%	Wisconsin	7.3%	3.0%
			Wyoming	3.3%	2.2%
			National	13.2%	1.9%

i Fatality Analysis Reporting System 2002, analysis by the Surface Transportation Policy Project

ii Fiscal Management Information System, analysis by the Surface Transportation Policy Project



Strengthen and Protect Enhancements, CMAQ, and other TEA-21 Programs

ISSUE

Since 1991, ISTEA and TEA-21 have provided over \$2.5 billion for bicycling and pedestrian projects through a variety of programs and policies. The reauthorization of TEA-21 should protect, strengthen and, in some cases, expand these valuable programs and policies. **Please insure full funding for core programs.**

STATUS

Both bills continue the major programs that have funded bike/ped programs: Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and Scenic Byways. Funding levels increase by 60 percent in the Senate bill, but could see only a slight increase or even flat line in the House bill if funding levels are cut to match the Senate's. This is because of a significant increase in discretionary funding in the House bill, which reduces money available for the core programs. The new Safe Routes to School program is considered a core program.

The House bill suggests a significant increase in funding for the Recreational Trails Program. The bills also continue the broad eligibility for bike projects in most funding categories, renews funding for a bicycle funding for an information clearinghouse, and provide more opportunity for input from bicyclists in planning processes.

The Senate bill creates a program called "Alternative Transportation in National Parks" with \$25 million a year in funding. Bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible.

The House bill adds bicycling and walking to the list of research topics for the US Department of Transportation.

Support for these programs is strong. Last year's landslide victory on Enhancements funding in the House has discouraged attacks on the program. However, if overall funding is reduced, some will likely suggest that funding for non-highway programs such as Enhancements be eliminated, rather than just proportionally reduced.

BACKGROUND

In the 20 years prior to ISTEA, an average of less than \$2 million per year was spent by all 50 states combined on bicycle and pedestrian projects – this has risen to an average of more than \$200 million per year during the TEA-21 years. The increase has come without a specific set-aside program: bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for all the major funding categories. More than \$2.5 billion of ISTEA and TEA-21 funds have been invested in bicycling and walking since 1991. This investment has increased transportation choice in thousands of communities across the country, improved the safety of cyclists, promoted bicycle use, and reduced energy consumption and air pollution.

Yet, \$2.5 billion is still less than one percent of all federal transportation funds spent since 1991. Bicycling and walking account for nearly 10 percent of trips and 13 percent of traffic fatalities. Approximately three-quarters of the funding have come from the Transportation Enhancements program. CMAQ, Recreational Trails, Parks Roads and Parkways, Section 402 and Scenic Byways have also been an important source of funds in some states. Very little has come from the mainstream transportation funding programs. At least \$1 billion of bicycle and pedestrian projects are stuck in the delivery pipeline: funds have been awarded but the projects have yet to be implemented.

Safe Routes to School

ISSUE

In the 1960's, more than 60 percent of children walked or rode their bikes to school. Today, that figure is closer to 10 percent. Why is this occurring? Safety, distance, heavy traffic, fear of crime, lack of sidewalks, and inconvenience are among the reasons parents list for not allowing their children to walk and bike to school. Parents, public health officials, school administrators and others who recognize the benefits of children walking and biking to school have begun Safe Routes to School programs to make it safe and fun for children to get to school under their own power. Enabling and encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school will improve their safety, provide them with healthy exercise, reduce traffic around schools, reduce fuel consumption and pollution, increase community involvement, and encourage active lifestyles from an early age.

Congress needs to fully fund a national Safe Routes to School program at \$250 million a year.

STATUS

The House reauthorization bill creates a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, identical to the SRTS language in H.R. 2568, the Pedestrian and Cyclist Equity Act. This language fully funds a national SRTS program at \$250 million a year. Funds would be distributed to states in proportion to the number of primary and secondary school students in the state, with no state receiving less than \$2 million. At least 10 percent of funds must be used for non-infrastructure purposes. This language also provides funds for a national SRTS clearinghouse and a national SRTS task force.

The Senate reauthorization bill includes a much less extensive SRTS program funded at \$70 million a year.

BACKGROUND

Many communities are no longer set up for the walk or bike to school: subdivisions lack sidewalks, or are separated from school by a busy multi-lane road. Parents and children spend more time than ever in the car – more than an hour a day now for the average child in the U.S.

Millions of parents now drop children at school on the way to work, creating traffic jams in school parking lots. Meanwhile, many children are struggling with being overweight, and 15 percent of children are now considered obese, putting them at risk of a number of chronic diseases.

A growing number of communities are embracing SRTS programs, which include infrastructure improvements, educational initiatives, and encouragement activities to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing alternative.

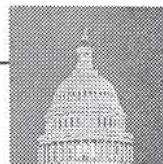
In the U.S., SRTS programs are active in at least 18 states. From Marin County, CA, to the Bronx, NY, parents and local advocates have established local programs that examine safety around schools and work to correct it, while encouraging children to walk and bike to school. Comprehensive programs address engineering of the streets for safety; education and encouragement of children, parents and teachers; and increased enforcement of traffic laws. Programs can include:

- Walkability and bikeability audits of the safety of streets around schools
- Use of traffic calming devices to slow traffic and give pedestrians priority
- Programs that educate children on walking and biking safely and challenge them to do so often
- "Walking school buses" in which one or two parents or volunteers escort a group of children on the walk to school
- Increased traffic enforcement around schools
- Cooperation between school officials, law enforcement officials, and transportation planners

A recent national poll by the Surface Transportation Policy Project found that 74% of Americans favor using state transportation money to create safe routes for children to bike and walk to school, even if this means less funding for new highways.

OPPOSITION CONCERNS

Few, if any, oppose encouraging and enabling children to walk and bike to school.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Safe Routes to School programs address a number of significant concerns:

- Almost half of young people are not vigorously active on a regular basis; one in eight is overweight or obese.
- More than 10 percent of all trips are “escort” trips, children being ferried around by adults; this rises to almost one-third of trips in the morning rush hours.
- Children today have much less independence, freedom to move around, and opportunities to “discover” their world than any previous generation.
- Motor vehicles are the leading cause of death for children of every age 4-14 years old (2,197 fatalities and 267,000 injuries in 2001).
- Children in the US spend an average of more than one hour in a car every day and between three and four hours a day watching TV.

Communities across the country are embracing Safe Routes to School programs with significant successes:

- In 2000, California created a statewide Safe Routes to School program using Safety Set-aside funds. Requests for funding totaled more than five times the available money.
- In 2002, Texas DOT received funding requests totaling \$45 million for their newly-established \$3 million Safe Routes to School fund.
- A federal Safe Routes to School pilot program in Marin County, CA, spurred a 57% increase in the number of children walking and bicycling to school and a 29% drop in car trips – all in the first year of operation.
- A second federal pilot program in Arlington, MA, spurred Arlington County to invest over \$1 million to improve sidewalks, streets and signals to address safety issues around schools.
- The nation’s first Safe Routes to School initiative started with 38 schools in the Bronx area of New York City – it has since been expanded to all 1,359 schools in the city.
- Denmark has cut pedestrian and bicycle casualties among school children by more than 80% since focusing on Safe Routes to School in 1976.



Bicycle Commuter Act

ISSUE

The Bicycle Commuter Act would extend the transportation fringe benefit in the tax code to bicycle commuters. Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Mark Foley (R-FL) introduced the House version, H.R. 1052. The Senate companion measure, S. 1093 was introduced by Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Ron Wyden (D-OR). **Congress should include this measure as part of the reauthorization of TEA-21.**

STATUS

The Senate reauthorization bill does not include the language of S. 1093, but serious efforts are underway to have H.R. 1052 added to the House reauthorization bill. H.R. 1052 currently has 37 cosponsors.

BACKGROUND

The transportation fringe benefit was initially added to TEA-21 as an incentive to get more people to use alternative modes of transportation for commuting to work. The goal was to reduce traffic congestion, pollution and wear and tear on the roads.

Under current law, an employer can offer an employee up to \$100 a month for mass transit (subway, bus, train, van-pool, etc.) and up to \$190 per month for parking, which is tax-free if the employer is making the purchase for the employee. The employer may also give a cash reimbursement for the same transportation, but a cash reimbursement is included as taxable income to the employee. In either case, the employer is able to take a business deduction for the benefit. Another option allows an employer to permit an employee to take a tax-free payroll deduction for the purchase of transit tickets. Participation is completely voluntary. A business is not required to offer the fringe benefit, nor is it required to offer the maximum amount.

The Bicycle Commuter Act would allow an employer to offer a monthly cash reimbursement to an employee who commutes to work by bicycle, providing a tax benefit to the employer and helping defray commuting expenses for the bicyclist.

While not in the form of tickets, tokens or passes, bicycle commuters do have tangible expenses. In addition to raingear, lights, maintenance, panniers, etc., bicyclists also incur commuter-related expenses with bike lockers, bike parking, gym facilities (if not provided by the employer), etc.

OPPOSITION CONCERNS

The actual cost of extending the transportation fringe benefit to bicycle commuters would be minimal. The benefit is only available to those who work for participating businesses. Regardless, the savings achieved by reduced traffic congestion, pollution, and road maintenance would far outweigh other costs.



FACTS & FIGURES

- There is great potential to increase the numbers of bicycle commuters in the U.S., which would help reduce the number of trips made by automobile. Forty percent of all trips in the U.S. are made within two miles of the home and 50% of the working population commutes five miles or less to work. (1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey).
- According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) October 2000 Omnibus Household Survey, 41.3 million Americans (20.0%) used a bicycle for transportation in the 30 days measured in the survey. Bicycling is the second most preferred form of transportation after the automobile, ahead of public transportation. Over 9.2 million (22.3%) of the 41.3 million people who bicycled did so more than ten of the 30 days.
- Several findings from the study indicate a growing concern among Americans with the impact of transportation choices on quality of life. Some 79.1 million (38%) of all Americans feel that the availability of bikeways, walking paths, and sidewalks for getting to work, shopping, and recreation is very important in choosing where to live.
- Half of all Americans (99.0 million people) believe that cars, SUVs, pickups, and vans are the primary cause of air pollution in their communities and 65% (135.4 million) are concerned about the level of traffic congestion on the roads in their communities.
- Cycling is an excellent activity to help reverse the alarming rise in obesity rates across the country. In 1991 we had only four states reporting more than 15% of their adult population as obese. In 1997, the number skyrocketed to 37 states. More than 50% of the US adult population is overweight, one of every four adults is obese, and worse still is the sad fact that one of every four children is overweight.
- The obesity condition results in a cost of over \$22 billion annually in health care and personal living expenses. Physical inactivity is a primary factor in at least 200,000 deaths annually, approximately 10% of the total number of deaths, and 25% of all chronic disease-related deaths.
- Recreational bike riding is a safe, low-impact, aerobic activity for Americans of all ages. Bike commuting is an ideal solution to the need for moderate physical activity, which can be practiced five times a week. A 130-pound cyclist burns 402 calories while pedaling 14 miles in an hour. A 180-pound cyclist burns 540 calories while pedaling 14 miles in an hour.